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DIRECTOR CLAPPER HONORS FALLEN MARINE

Hudson Valley family thanked for sacrifice

By Sgt. Timothy T. Parish, USMC, Marine Corps Recruiting Station Albany, NY

STEWART AIR NATIONAL GUARD BASE, Newburgh, N.Y. – Family, friends, Marines and intelligence leaders gathered to honor a fallen Pleasant Valley, N.Y., Marine at a ceremony here Aug. 31.

The parents of Marine Capt. Trevor J. Yurista, Ronald and Donna Yurista, accepted the National Intelligence Medal for Valor from the Director of National Intelligence, The Honorable James R. Clapper, who lauded Yurista for his bravery under fire and thanked his family for their sacrifice.

“I’m privileged to be here today to pay tribute to an outstanding Marine, an extraordinary intelligence professional, and an exemplary American,” said Clapper. “His service in uniform was truly exemplary. The word hero sometimes can be overused but in Trevor’s case there is no doubt about it. Though he’s already been recognized in numerous ceremonies by the Marine Corps for his honor, courage and commitment, now it is the great privilege and honor of the intelligence community in which he also served to recognize the professionalism, valor and sacrifice of a brave young leader.”

Yurista deployed to Southern Afghanistan in September 2008 to help destroy the insurgent networks in Helmand Province and the insurgent’s ability to target U.S. and international forces operating there. It was his third deployment, after two tours in Iraq.

After several months of intelligence gathering and analysis that identified enemy strongholds, Yurista was mortally wounded in October 2008 during an operation to destroy an improvised explosive device factory in Now Zad District. He was reinforcing 2nd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment’s Force Reconnaissance Platoon.

According to his award citation, Yurista braved sustained enemy fire to pinpoint targets, allowing Marine aircraft to destroy more than 1,000 pounds of explosives meant to injure or kill troops or Afghan civilians.

After the explosives and IED factory were destroyed and after helping repel numerous enemy assaults, Yurista was struck and mortally wounded by an IED while returning to base.

The National Intelligence Medal for Valor is the second highest award for bravery in the intelligence community and is second only to the Intelligence Cross. It was established in 2008 to honor the accomplishments of both military and civilian intelligence personnel. It is awarded to intelligence professionals who go above and beyond the call of duty in an intelligence gathering capacity.

“This brave and selfless hero paid the ultimate price. No one knew more about the danger there than [Yurista]”, said Clapper. “No one could have blamed him if he had simply given the platoon the correct intelligence, which was his job, and then sent them out to do their job. But everyone who knew Trevor knew that this was not the kind of Marine he was. Captain Yurista was a leader and a hero and someone who felt the need to set the example. No one could ever give more for his country or his fellow Marines.”

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